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CIA Sponsored Research Policy

Is Adopted by University

THE REPORT of the Special Committee on CIA-sponsored Research was endorsed by the Graduate Council last month and was approved by the office of Provost Albert J. Kuhn as University policy.

Said the report:

"Early in its deliberations concerning the relationship between CIA-sponsored research and the Ohio State community, the Special Committee recognized that a distinction must be made between the situation where the relationship with the CIA is mediated through the University's contracting agencies, and an independent relationship between a faculty member as an individual and the CIA or other intelligence agencies . . . It is fortunate that, in both instances, the University already has in existence stated policies covering the situations. Although these policies were not specifically designed for relationships with the CIA or other intelligence agencies, we concluded that the University, in its thinking and planning, had anticipated possible problems and created guidelines or rules that are applicable to the CIA as well as to other organizations."

In the area of University-mediated research, the Special Committee noted that "Guidelines for Sponsored Research" sets conditions that must be met in the submission of a grant or contract to any potential sponsor. Among those guidelines:

"The University does not accept sponsored research that prevents disclosure of the sponsor or the existence of the contract."

The appropriateness of the research to academic pursuits must be reviewed."

"Restrictions on publication and scholarly communication should be minimal."

"If a proposal involved national security classification, it must be justified to the appropriate department chairman or the director of the relevant Center or Institute, and then to the Dean of the College and Provost of the University."

The Special Committee felt the guidelines provide strong checks and balances, yet permit certain classes of national security research to be conducted on the campus on occasion.

Another safeguard, in the Special Committee's opinion, are the two Human Subject Review Committees on campus. One is in the area of Biomedical Sciences, the other in the area of Social and Behavioral Sciences. The committees are composed of professors from the appropriate disciplines and a member from outside the University community. Their review policies must be approved

by the Office for Protection from Research Risks of the National Institutes of Health.

The committees consider such matters as: prior informed consent from a subject and degree and control of subject risk. All research proposals must be passed by the appropriate committee before being submitted to a sponsoring agency. Says the Special Committee: "The careful review of these committees removes the spectre of an individual becoming an unknowing and unwilling subject for some research."

On the matter of independent relationships with sponsoring agencies, the Special Committee noted:

"According to University rules, a staff member can engage in outside consultancies to a limited degree, and the Special Committee feels that consultancies with the CIA or other intelligence agencies should be treated in the same fashion as other consultancies . . . The rules for such activities are spelled out in the Faculty Handbook. To make special rules for one kind of consultancy as opposed to another would, we believe, be an infringement of the individual's freedom in determining off-campus work schedules. The existing rules for all off-campus consultancies place limitations on time devoted to those activities, and they require that some information concerning the activity be given to the individual's departmental chairman. To a certain extent, the policies of the Human Subject Review Committee also operate here since the review procedure is required for all research conducted on the campus, whether it be sponsored or not. Thus, a professor could not privately contract with any agency to do research with human subjects on the campus without obtaining prior clearance from the Human Subject Review Committee. It is also possible that, if the research were to be conducted off campus but was identified with the University, it would need to be reviewed and cleared."

"The Special Committee considers that by the nature of the University's position in society, a member of the University Community enjoys a position of trust and respect that should not be violated by him or her individually by any actions that may result from associations with intelligence agencies."

Chairman of the Special Committee was Delos D. Wickens, department of psychology. Members included: Prof. Geoffrey Keller, astronomy; Prof. Aharon Ksienski, electrical engineering; Prof. John Riner, mathematics; Prof. Charles Ritter, theatre; Prof. Sheldon Shore, chemistry; Prof. Edward Taaffe, geography; Prof. Roy Tassava, zoology; and Vice Provost Jules LaPidus.